

The **POLICE AUTHORITY** met at **SHIRE HALL, WARWICK**, on the **7th APRIL 2008**.

Present:-

Philip Blundell (Independent Member)(**Chair**)
Ian Francis (Lay Justice Member)(**Vice Chair**)

Independent Members:-

Dorrette McAuslan, Steve Nicklin, John Rennie and Phil Robson

Lay Justice Members:-

Mike Edwards and Alan Woodward

County Councillors:-

Chris Davis, Anne Forwood, Eithne Goode, Richard Hobbs, Phillip Morris-Jones, Katherine King, Izzi Seccombe and John Vereker.

Police: -

Chief Constable Keith Bristow, Assistant Chief Constable Bill Holland, Assistant Chief Constable Lewis Benjamin, Simon Pameley, Richard Elkin, Derek Kitchen, Carl Baldacchino and Kate Sandell.

Police Authority: -

Eric Wood, Dave Clarke, Tony Brown, Oliver Winters, Neil Gulliver, Steve Baldwin and Debbie Mullis.

In Attendance:-

Greta Needham and Fionnuala Gill.

1. Chair's Announcements

None.

2. General

(1) Apologies

An apology was received from Bob Hicks and Simon Payne.

(2) Declaration of Members' Personal and Prejudicial Interests

None.

3. Budget 2008/09 – Latest Update on Potential Capping

The report by the Chief Executive was considered.

Eric Wood introduced the report and then invited Dave Clarke to explain the implications of the options available to the Authority.

Dave Clarke drew the following points to Members' attention:-

- If the Government's decision was not challenged, the Authority would have to set a new budget and face rebilling costs of between £500,000 and £1million.
- Under the Government's proposals, the increase in the Authority's net budget requirement would be limited to 4.96% which would mean a council tax increase limited to 8.26%. This in turn would reduce the Authority's budget by £1.333m.
- Any challenge would need to be submitted to DCLG by the 16th April 2008.
- He believed that the Authority would be able to submit a strong case based on performance by the Force over the past year.
- The Government had 4 options which it could invoke against the Authority –
 - (i) designate the budget as the Authority has proposed.
 - (ii) designate the budget at a figure below proposed by the Authority and require rebilling to take place
 - (iii) nominate the Authority which would have an impact on future years' budgets
 - (iv) set the Authority's budget for 2009/2010 now.
- The Minister of State for Local Government, together with the Police Minister, has agreed to meet with representatives from the 7 police authorities affected as well as receiving representations from local MPs.
- He was also meeting with HMIC to look at the Authority's case and to hopefully get their support.

Keith Bristow then commented that the Authority must remember what had been achieved during 2007/08 highlighted by outstanding performance by the Force. If that level of performance was to be maintained during 2008/09, it was necessary to have the financial support which the Authority's budget provided.

Fionnuala Gill spoke on behalf of the Association of Police Authorities who were strongly opposed the capping of any of the 7 authorities. It was clear that the majority of the public were in favour of paying higher council taxes if it meant increased public safety. She added that the Local Government Association had expressed their strong support for the council tax increases.

The Chair then invited Members to comment. All Members gave their full support to supporting the Authority's case in challenging the Government's decision.

Ian Francis, seconded by Izzi Seccombe, then moved and it was unanimously Resolved:-

That the Authority challenges the maximum proposed by the Minister for Local Government as the budget requirement and presents a case to the Minister in support of the decisions arrived at at the meeting of the Police Authority on the 20th February 2008.

The meeting then adjourned from 11.15am to 11.35am.

4. Exclusion of Members of the Public

Resolved: -

That the members of the public be excluded from the meeting for the following agenda items on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of

exempt information as defined in paragraph 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

5. Warwickshire Justice Centre Programme

The report of the Chief Executive on the progress of the project was noted.

6. Warwickshire Police Headquarters Planning Application

The report of the Resources Panel was considered.

The Authority gave detailed consideration to the options available to progress the planning application and agree on a course of action.

7. Exempt Minutes of the Meetings held on the 20th February and the 20th March 2008 and Matters Arising.

(1) Minutes

Resolved:-

That the exempt minutes of the Police Authority's meeting held on the 21st January 2008 be approved.

(2) Matters Arising

Keith Bristow reported Chief Superintendent Nick Croft had been appointed Assistant Chief Constable with South Wales Police and Inspector Mike Fawcett has been promoted to the rank of Superintendent with Norfolk Constabulary.

The Chair asked that the Authority's congratulations be passed to both officers.

8. Urgent Business

None.

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Chair of the Authority

The meeting closed at 12.25pm